GEOGRAPHIC NEWS BULLETIN

Prepared Weekly by

THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

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General Headquarters, Washington, D. C.

for

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Education

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GIRLS AT DORGALI, SARDINIA (See Bulletin No. 3)

Note the queer bonnets, made from silk of many colors.

HOW TO OBTAIN THE BULLETIN

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Haiti: Magic Isle of the Indies

PICTURE an island more wonderful, more beautiful and more richly endowed by nature even than the fabled isles that medieval mariners loved to dream about; a country of pleasant peaks, charming vales and fertile plains; an idyllic land set in a summer sea.

Picture then a land where the avarice of conquerors, ruthlessly exploiting, has blasted promises of progress; where the passions of men have run riot; where tyrant after tyrant, some great, some petty, have waded to power through pools of blood; a land from which the gods of peace and industry seem to have turned away.

Both are pictures of Haiti, the relations between which country and the United States are now under discussion.

An Island With Four Names

To avoid confusion, it must be explained at the outset that the name Haiti is used sometimes to denote the entire island, which is the second largest land mass in the West Indies, sometimes to denote merely the Republic of Haiti which occupies the western third of its area. The possibilities of confusion are increased by the fact that the island is also known as Santo Domingo and San Domingo, names applied likewise to the Dominican Republic, which occupies the eastern two-thirds of the land unit.

The name Haiti is much used because it was the descriptive term, meaning "high land," given to the island by its aborigines. This was the favorite island of the West Indies to Columbus, who reserved for it the most complimentary name bestowed on the lands which he discovered—Hispaniola, "little Spain." Something of the impression which this beautiful and promising island made on the great discoverer can be gleaned from his reference to it as a "Garden of Eden," and from the fact that he named the point at which he first set foot on Haiti, December 6, 1492, "The Vale of Paradise."

Scene of an Historic Shipwreck

History has been prodigal to the Island of Haiti and has crowded one interesting and tragic event after another into the relatively short span of years since the eyes of white men first beheld its towering peaks. On its northern coast, near the present Cape Haitien, the *Santa Maria*, which bore Columbus to the New World, was wrecked on Christmas Eve, 1492, and from its broken, historic boards was set up by the crew the first structure erected by Europeans in the Western Hemisphere. This was the Fortress of Navidad in which the men of the *Santa Maria* were killed while Columbus was on his return voyage to Spain to report his epoch-making discovery of "the Indies."

Farther to the east on the northern coast of the island, Columbus built on his return the first white settlement in the New World, naming the little town "Isabella" for the queen who had made his voyage of discovery possible.

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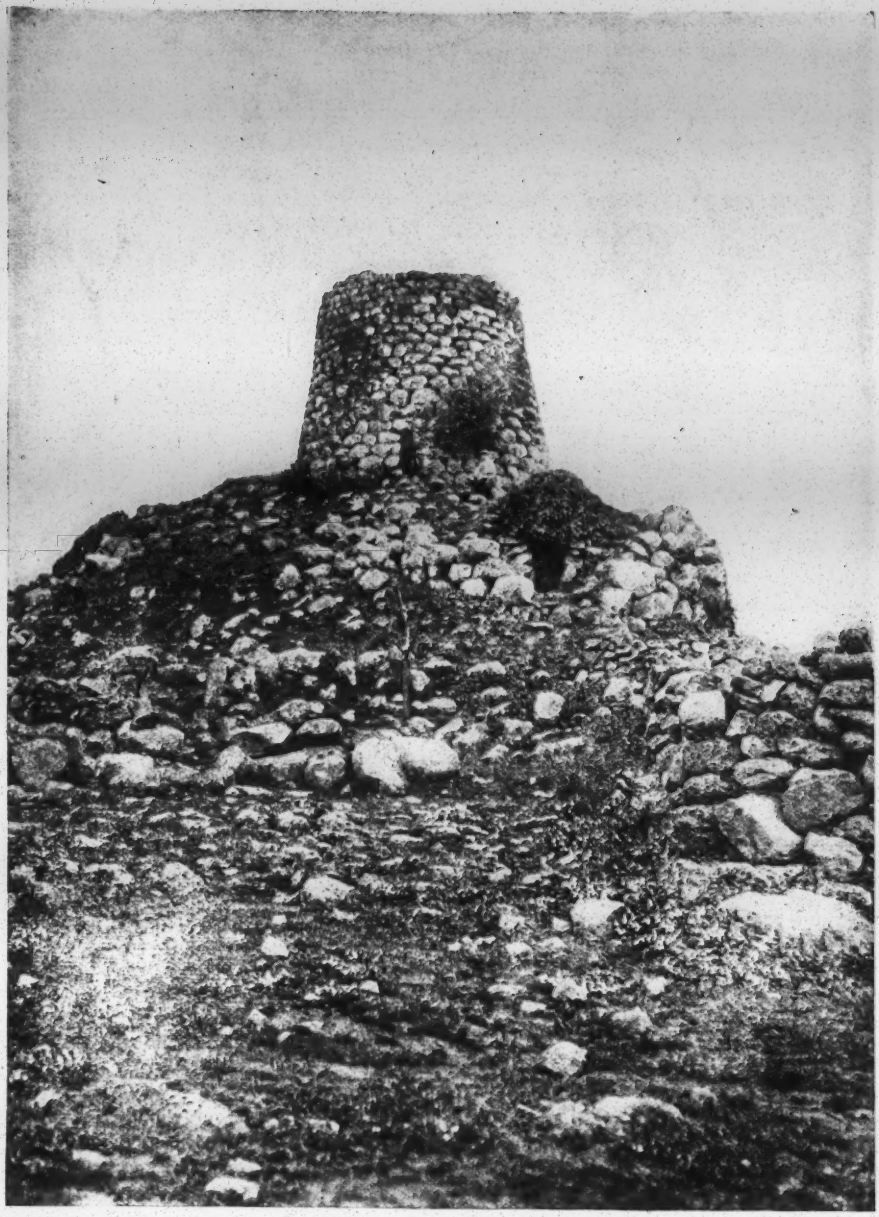

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A PREHISTORIC TOWER OF SARDINIA (See Bulletin No. 3)

Numerous monuments like this relic of the Bronze Age dot Sardinia. The arrangements of the interior of these structures are such as to indicate that they were used as fortified habitations and not as tombs or temples. The diameters of these truncated cones range from 30 to 100 feet at the base, and they are from 30 to 60 feet high. The entrances, about 6 feet high and 2 feet wide, almost invariably face south.

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The Flamingo, a Bird of Beauty and Mystery, Saved from Extinction

ASSURANCE that the flamingo, bird of beauty and mystery, will escape extinction is contained in a letter from H. E. W. Grant, colonial governor of the Bahamas, which says:

"You will be glad to hear that an Order in Council has been passed giving complete protection to the flamingo. This glory of our marshes owes the expedition a debt of gratitude."

The action of the Bahamas Council was taken following an expedition, which trailed the flamingo, the most beautiful of the world's larger birds, to its last stand; took motion pictures of the timorous creatures; and brought about a realization of how near they were to becoming extinct in the New World through annihilation by native sponge fishermen. These fishermen hunted them down for food purposes at the nesting and molting season.

Two-thirds Perished in Less Than Twenty Years

The first American naturalist to locate and study the gorgeous flamingo was Dr. Frank M. Chapman in 1901, when he estimated that some 20,000 flamingoes were to be found on one of the little known islands of the Bahama group. Since then it is believed that fully two-thirds of the colonies have perished.

The expedition that spent ten days in the abysmal salt swamps of Andros Island, filming the flamingo and studying his habitat, for scientific purposes, was sent out by the Miami Aquarium Association.

A yacht was the mother ship of the expedition and an express cruiser was used as a scout boat. Canvas canoes were taken along to get into the shallow salt creeks, and nose into the lagoons for deep entrances to the murky swamps where the flamingo hides. A Bahama guide, Peter Bannister, who had aided Dr. Chapman's party nineteen years ago, also went with the party.

After penetrating to the utmost navigable points with the canoes it was necessary to traverse miles of the "swash" or tidal marl marshes, carrying the heavy cameras and motion picture machines, in search for the birds. Wading in the water up to the waist, knee deep in the marl mud, was the daily program, while blinding swarms of mosquitoes compelled nightly retreats to the yacht, anchored several miles off shore.

Flamingo Lives Exclusively on a Diet of Shells

But the hardships found a worthy reward when the party came upon colonies of several hundred birds, described by a member of the party as a "flaming mass of brilliant scarlet bodies, jet black beneath the huge wings, with their long, slender necks gracefully lowering and raising their Roman-nosed heads as they sought beneath the water the tiny spiral shell known to

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On this second trip Columbus brought with him to his magic isle a great fleet bearing a large force of soldiers and adventurers. After defeating the natives the conquerors journeyed to the south coast and there laid the foundations of the city of Santo Domingo—first permanent city established by Europeans in America, for many years the most important outpost of western civilization, and forerunner of the countless cities and villages that are the seats today of the industry, commerce and culture of three Americas.

Island's Promised Prosperity Ruined by Avarice

It was a wonderful future that seemed to open before Columbus and his fellow voyagers as they took possession of the most favored of the Antilles. Those of vision among them saw it in the future, no doubt, as a mighty island treasure house, yielding up its riches of mine and forest and field; harboring a great and prosperous population. But the avarice of man stepped in and blotted out the promising picture. The Spanish adventurers, unwilling to work, enslaved the native Indians and drove them so cruelly that they died off by thousands. When death threatened to rob them of their laborers, the exploiters imported large numbers of African slaves who were better able to bear up under the heavy tasks and who multiplied rapidly. Soon the natives were exterminated and the negro slaves and free mulattoes far outnumbered the white land owners.

A brief golden age in so far as the exploiters were concerned; the arousing of envy on the part of English and French buccaneers; wars which divided the sovereignty between Spain and France and finally left the latter in complete control—these were chapters that followed one another rapidly in the history of Haiti. By the time of the birth of the United States the blacks and mulattoes in the western part of the island, that part first dominated by France and now the Republic of Haiti, outnumbered the whites fifteen to one; while those in the part of the island now under the Dominican Republic outnumbered the whites four to one.

A Century of Black Empires, Kingdoms and Republics

The seeds of oppression bore fruit under stimulation of the French Revolution, and in 1791 the slaves rose, ushering in a decade of bloodshed and revolting cruelties on both sides. Finally in 1804 independence was obtained, slavery was abolished, and the negro Republic of Haiti was born. The country passed through the stages of a negro "empire" and "kingdom" before a republic became the accepted form of government. Haiti at one time conquered and annexed the Spanish part of the island, but in 1844 the latter separated from the negro republic and established the Dominican Republic.

The history of the Republic of Haiti, as well as the "empire" and "kingdom," has been a series of revolutions, assassinations of rulers, and general strife between factions in control of the government and those desiring forcibly to gain control. Of the twenty-eight rulers of Haiti since its first "Emperor," Dessalines, only four have completed their terms of office. Five were assassinated and most of the others were driven from office and even from the country. After a particularly bloody incident in 1915, when President Guillaume Sam was taken from the French Embassy and drawn and quartered in the streets of the capital by an infuriated mob, the United States occupied the island. A treaty was entered into similar to one with the Dominican Republic, but going further in that it provides for an American officered constabulary, regulation of matters pertaining to arms and ammunition, and the appointment of an American sanitary engineer to recommend methods for cleaning up the cities of the Republic. The latter have been said by globe-trotters to offer a greater affront to human nostrils than any other communities in existence.

The entire island of Haiti, with its two republics, has an area of approximately 28,000 square miles—slightly less than that of Ireland or the State of South Carolina. The Republic of Haiti covers an area a trifle greater than that of Massachusetts and has a population of about 2,000,000.

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Sardinia: Island of Pygmies, Wolfram and Would-Be Home Rule

A TRAVELER of fine imagination suggests that travel involves a double journey—"one forward through space, the other backward through time." Your steamboat ticket from Civitavecchia, the port of Rome, entitles you to an eight-hour voyage to Sardinia, but affords a premium of several thousand years backward to Europe's earliest traceable history.

Sardinia has a double interest just now because of the reported native demand for home rule, and because Americans have found tracts containing wolfram, highly prized as a source of tungsten.

The contact of America adds another stratum to the civilizations that have left a deposit in Sardinia. For the Romans and the Carthaginians operated mines there; and slender traces point to the presence of Egyptians and Phœnicians. In addition, Vandals, Saracens, Pisans, Genoese, Spaniards and Austrians held sway there before it fell to the House of Savoy and was attached to modern Italy.

"The Lost Isle of the Mediterranean"

Second only to Sicily among Mediterranean Islands, Sardinia has been referred to as the lost isle of that sea. Geographically it has been said to turn its back on Italy, for its east coast is mountainous. This isolation has a compensation in preserving the homogeneity of a people who have a special interest for students of racial history. Sardinians are small of stature. Even their soldiers have an average height a fraction under five feet four inches.

One theory is that they are the purest remaining descendants of the so-called Mediterranean race; another that they descended from certain African pygmy peoples, a speculation of peculiar interest in view of the present discussion over the reported finding of a race of pygmies in the Belgian Kongo by Dr. Leonard J. Vanderbergh, an American missionary. Lady Stanley has asserted that her husband, Henry M. Stanley, refers to the same little people in his book "In Darkest Africa."

Once the Siberia of Roman Empire

Other factors than its geography contributed to Sardinia's isolation. Once it was the Siberia of the Roman Empire, and graves were kept waiting for some convicts. Later it was afflicted by the medieval type of the Kentucky feud, the vendetta, and modern science found a new danger, greatly exaggerated for a time, in malaria.

Travelers who find their way to Sardinia, in increasing numbers, pronounce the island quaint and charming. Upon approach, the fragrance of wild shrubs and herbs complements the appeal to the eye of a "geological disorder that is arresting, but not, like the unromantic Alps, terrific."

Not only are the people under normal size, but this diminutiveness extends to animals, according to some anthropologists; a condition exactly the reverse of that in New Zealand, which tends to develop both animals and plants larger than normal.

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scientists as 'Cerithium,' upon which the flamingo lives exclusively in its native habitat."

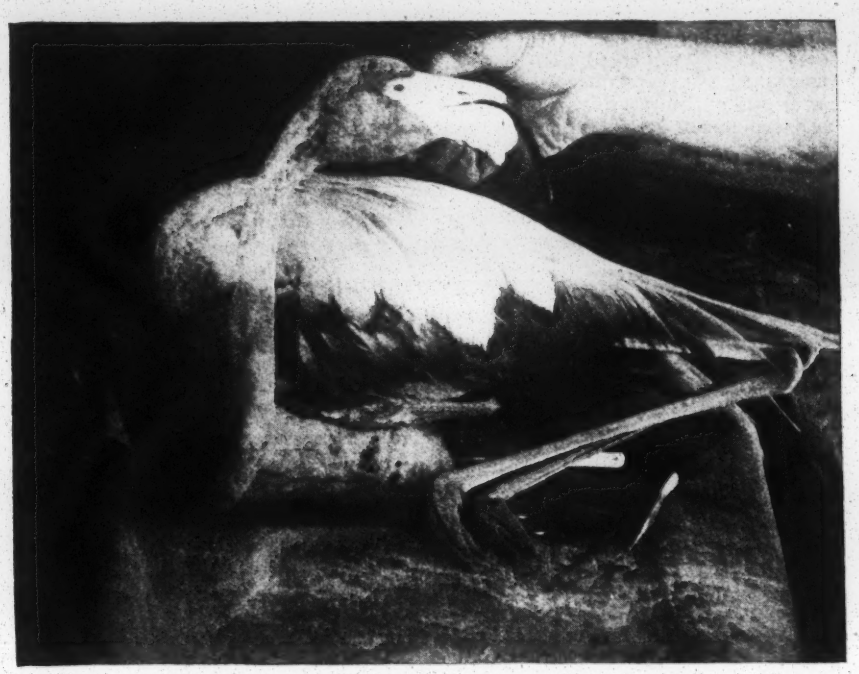
The expedition gathered much valuable scientific material, not only concerning the life habits of the flamingo, but of other rare birds and fish of the Bahamas. The isolation of the flamingo may be sensed from the fact that the members of the party were the first white men to land at Mangrove Key in seven years. Mangrove Key is a small hamlet presided over by a Crown Commission who is the only visible sign of British authority to be found on an island 90 miles long and 40 wide. Because of this isolation many of the little known "out islands" of the Bahamas, only now and then visited by the sponge fishers, have preserved primitive conditions that hold secrets of high value to the naturalist.

Enforce the Law to Protect Birds

Both Colonial Governor Grant, and F. C. Wells-Durant, Colonial Secretary of the Bahamas, extended every courtesy and assistance and were deeply interested in the results of the expedition, especially of the discovery which pointed to the threatened extinction of the flamingo. The Bahama law has protected the flamingo for 15 years, but the habitat of the bird is so far from settlements that little attention has been paid to the menace of the spongers.

The party found spongers in the act of killing the birds, and a government official swore in Bannister, the negro guide, the only English subject present, as a deputy game warden, and thus brought about the first arrest of the kind ever made.

Bulletin No. 2, November 22, 1920



WANTON SLAUGHTER OF THIS BEAUTIFUL BIRD HAS BEEN CHECKED BY EFFORTS OF A SCIENTIFIC EXPEDITION

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Airplanes to Whir Over Thunderous Falls

WHILE Niagara Falls will continue to hold their own as a mecca for honeymooners and other travelers, they must henceforth submit to comparison with another natural wonder, the Victoria Falls of the Zambesi, as Africa becomes frequented by tourists.

From being a place of mystery, so feared that Livingstone, who discovered the Falls in 1855, had great difficulty in persuading his followers to accompany him, the Falls now are visible from a railway that crosses the river half a mile below them, and they lie under the route of the proposed Cape to Cairo aerial service.

Louis Livingston Seaman, in a communication to the National Geographic Society, describes a visit to Victoria Falls and contrasts them with Niagara, as follows:

"Our approach was made by rail from the Indian Ocean at Beira, near the mouth of the Zambesi (that hotbed of micro-organisms, described by James Bryce as the most deadly in Africa), and across the narrow belt of swamp and jungle forming the coast; thence up the gradual slope to the volcanic plateau that forms the real continent of Africa. By morning an altitude of nearly 6,000 feet was reached.

Where Elephants Roam and Hippos Gambol

"This section still abounds with antelope, elephants, lions and other large game, which find excellent cover in the tall elephant grass or the dense forests and jungles, while in the river hippos still gambol and flounder in ungainly herds amid the floating islands of rank vegetation of Nile reeds and papyrus.

"With the altitude, however, came another and less grateful change. The forests were no longer in evidence, but in their stead were vast arid, birdless plains, with parched and hungry vegetation whose anemic and stunted growth bears witness to the scarcity of moisture that so severely affects Rhodesia and the great stretches of veldt far away to the Transvaal.

"Early in the morning of the third day we were suddenly awakened by the guard and treated to a scene of beauty never to be forgotten. Some 10 miles distant five enormous columns of vapor were shooting their roseate-tinted shafts hundreds of feet heavenward, while the faint roar of the Falls told us Mosi-oa-Tunga—the smoke that sounds—was no longer a mystery.

Sunrise Painted Picture of Vivid Beauty

"Each moment increased the beauty and vividness of the scene. With the first rays of the rising sun came a picture of color of wondrous loveliness. Delicate tints of violet, crimson, and beryl played through the mounting spray as it shot higher and higher, ultimately disappearing as virgin clouds in heaven, while the ever-increasing thunders of the waters lent an added solemnity to the view.

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Prehistoric Towers a Curiosity

But the most conspicuous curiosities of Sardinia are its *nuraghi*, great round towers, relics of the bronze age, which served as fortified dwellings for some prehistoric people. There are 5,000 or more of these towers, some 60 feet high, usually about 30 feet in diameter at the base, made of stone blocks and smeared with clay on the inside. Stairways lead to upper chambers and platforms.

Interesting as are these relics of unknown inhabitants, even more fascinating are the traces of ancient civilizations to be found in the daily life of Sardinians of today. One may find oxen plowing as they did in the days of the Roman Empire, implements which were introduced by the successive occupants, one Catalan town (Alghero) where there is no jarring note in the illusion of old Spain, and dances of the classic Greek period at the mountain feste.

Mountains Hold Ancestors to the Sheep We Know

Only in Sardinia and Corsica is the *mufloni*, predecessor of our sheep, to be found. Wild deer and wild boar are plentiful in the mountain districts. Tunny fishing is a major industry.

In area Sardinia is comparable to Vermont, but has more than twice the population of that State. The island lies directly south of Corsica, and is separated therefrom by the narrow straits of Bonifacio. In shape it has been compared to a human footprint.

Bulletin No. 3, November 22, 1920

A VIEW OF MILOT, CAPE HAITIEN, HAITI (See Bulletin No. 1)

It was off this coast that the flagship of Columbus was wrecked, and here he left most of his men when he returned to Spain for aid. Upon his return to the settlement, which is called "La Navidad," he found the whole party dead, including an Englishman, named Allard, and an Irishman, who was entered on the Santa Maria's books as William of Galway.

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The Marshall Islands

THE Marshall Islands, along with the Carolines, were seized by Japan soon after the outbreak of the war, and their permanent disposition has been under discussion. Their proximity to the Philippines has been referred to in this connection.

The two chains of curiously shaped atolls, or oral islands consisting of low-lying coral reefs encircling lagoons, known as the Marshall group, lie a little south of the center of an imaginary line between the Philippines and Hawaii.

Guam, Samoa and Honolulu form a triangle of trade routes, with its sides not penetrated by important steamship lines. Near the center of this isolated Pacific zone are the Marshall Islands.

Before the war Sydney was reached by steamer, a voyage of more than 3,000 miles. The only other egress is a steamer to Ponape which connects with the French line to Singapore.

Resemble Loosely Strung Chains of Jewels

Like two loosely strung chains of jewels, the islands stretch from northwest to southeast, each with its lagoon setting encased by a strangely shaped circlet of coral, some like triangles, harps and stirrups, and one outlining a bull's head with its horns.

Straight haired, dark brown natives, still preserving the religious significance of tattoo and taboo, are to be found. Once a sturdy, reliant, seafaring people, for they were the best mariners in the Pacific, the white man's coming, as in the case of his advent among the Eskimo and the Indian, did not seem wholly beneficial. In teaching them ways to live more easily civilization robbed them of that boldness and spirit of adventure which made them the hardiest of the Micronesian peoples. Many of the young died of tuberculosis.

Native society was rigorously organized into at least three clans, called septs. First were the nobles, from whom each community chose its chief, then the lesser nobles and a third group, some of whom might own property but none of whom could have more than one wife.

Monarch Beheaded Subjects Who Learned More Than He

Woman was given a higher position than among most savages because succession was through the female line. But the chief's power was absolute, to the point of life and death. One ambitious ruler learned an alphabet and is said to have beheaded all his subjects who seemed likely to acquire more knowledge than he had. In some islands the mother was allowed to keep only the first three children. She had to bury the fourth.

Skillful and fearless navigators, the natives used bread-tree wood to make sailing canoes in which they would voyage for months. They devised charts, made of sticks, showing the locations of islands and the directions of prevailing winds.

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"Hardly could we wait to reach our destination, so great was our enthusiasm. But our hopes were doomed to momentary disappointment, only to be more than realized after a study of the environment; for, notwithstanding their magnitude, the first view of Victoria Falls is decidedly disappointing.

"Although nearly a mile in width and 400 feet in height, the grandeur of their proportions is eclipsed by the sudden disappearance of the river, as it plunges into a narrow, rocky fissure extending across its entire width. Only at a single central point is there a breach in this fissure through which the Falls can be seen and appreciated in their full proportions, where the converging waters rush madly to the zigzag canyon below. So restricted is this view that there is an entire absence of that awe-inspiring and almost paralyzing effect which strikes the visitor dumb with wonder and amazement when Niagara bursts on his near vision.

Lack the Majesty of Niagara

"On first sight of the Victoria Falls one involuntarily exclaims, 'Oh, how beautiful!' but they lack the majesty of our grand Niagara.

"No single visit can adequately reveal the fullness of their charms, but repeated excursions must be made to their islands and precipices, their grottos and palm gardens, their rain forests and projecting crags, their rainbows and cataracts and many-sided views of their exquisite setting in the emerald framework of tropic forests, before their indescribable beauty can be appreciated. The fascination of discovering new and hidden charms from different points of view grows on the visitor and becomes one of the greatest attractions.

"Had the Falls been in America, the Indians would surely have named them Minnehaha, Laughing Waters; for like a coy maiden are their fascinations, half concealing, half betraying their beauties, and requiring much wooing before revealing all their loveliness of hidden treasures and charm."

Ancestor worship was their predominant religious sentiment. With petitions and gifts they worshipped the departed, whose spirits were supposed to return to earth in certain palm trees which they set off in stone enclosures. Birds and fishes sometimes embodied these spirits, they believed, and thus certain species became taboo.

Many Taboos—And Why

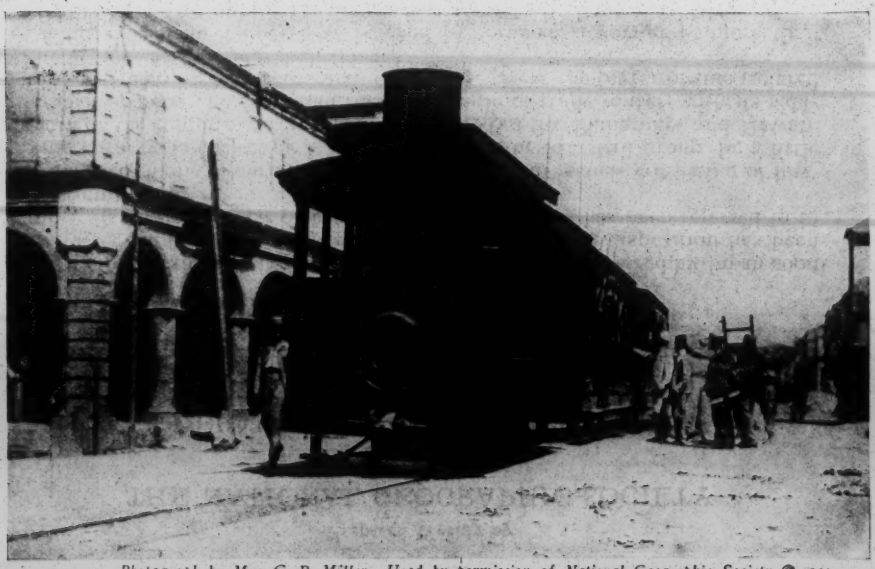
Examples of taboo abound. Some served a useful purpose. Cocoanut fruit might not be eaten until the bread fruit no longer was available, thus giving the former a chance to ripen. Fruit from the trees of a departed tribesman also was taboo for a time to those outside his family. This assured his wife and children a means of sustenance. Chiefs and others of the highest class also were immune from injury.

Tattooing of the young was a religious ceremonial and, like the Papuans, they inserted wooden discs in their ear lobes to distend them.

Homes of the natives were not pretentious. Floors were raised above the ground to escape the rats, and thatched roofs covered the combination house and storage room.

The two island groups are known as the Ratak and Ralik chains. Their entire area is not more than 160 square miles; their native population 15,000, with fewer than 300 foreigners. The seat of German government was on Jaluit and the most populous island is Majeru, with but 1,600 persons.

Other explorers had touched at the islands but they, with the Gilbert group, took their names from Captains Marshall and Gilbert, who explored them in 1788. The Germans annexed the islands in 1886.



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STREET CAR SERVICE IN PORT AU PRINCE, HAITI

The Haitian street railroad makes one think of the old-time elevated train service in New York. The engines are rusty, leaky, and carry smokestacks seemingly huge enough for a trans-Atlantic liner.